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ABSTRACT

School counselors are expected to play a vital role in reforms called for in the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (HB 3565). A study was designed to develop a profile of school counselors which includes information about their current job responsibilities, expected responsibilities in the future school reform context, training needs, and overall concerns/reactions to HB 3565. Only 30 percent of the counselors surveyed (N=812) think that their current caseloads are satisfactory; most think that caseloads are too high, making it difficult for counselors to respond to the additional demands inherent in implementation of HB 3565. Respondents see their greatest needs for training in the areas of student motivation problems, providing work-based opportunities and internships, counseling on family problems, applying Oregon school law, and dealing with psychological problems of students and families. Additional findings include: (1) a great majority of counselors are satisfied with their current positions; (2) further diversity is needed within the counselor pool; (3) a high replacement need exists for school counselors based on projected retirement plans of counselors over the next 10 years; and (4) counselors predict that teachers will be more involved in providing career advising to students in the future under HB 3565. (IAH)

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1992 OREGON SCHOOL COUNSELOR STUDY

completed for

The Joint Education Boards

- Board of Education and Board of Higher Education -

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Oregon Department of Education
Oregon State System of Higher Education
Teacher Standards and Practices Commission
Oregon Association of Colleges of Teacher Education

1992 OREGON SCHOOL COUNSELOR STUDY

completed for
The Joint Education Boards
— Board of Education and Board of Higher Education —

INTRODUCTION

The Oregon School Counselors Study was requested by the Joint Boards of Education in Fall 1991, to provide information needed to prepare for the reforms called for in the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (HB 3565). Since school counselors are expected to play a vital role in Oregon's school reform, the study was designed to develop a profile of school counselors including information about their current job responsibilities, expected responsibilities in the future school reform context, training needs, and overall concerns/reactions to HB 3565.

A 151-item questionnaire was mailed on April 15, 1992 to all 1,225 counselors and child development specialists employed in an Oregon public school (mailing list/labels were provided by the Oregon Department of Education). A reminder postcard was mailed to nonrespondents on May 15 encouraging them to return their surveys. By July 6, 1992, 812 responses were received by the Office of Academic Affairs, State System of Higher Education, for a response rate of 66 percent.

Data entry and analysis were completed by Dr. Lee Young, University of Oregon research assistant on special assignment to OSSHE. Data were reviewed with staff from the Oregon Department of Education and Teacher Standards and Practices Commission in early July. This report is a summary of the findings from the study. Full data summaries are being provided to collaborating agencies, universities with school counseling programs, and other interested groups.

Inquiries about the study procedures, analysis, or data summaries should be referred to Dr. Holly Zanville, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Oregon State System of Higher Education, who served as project director for this Joint Boards study.

GENDER, AGE, RACE

Among the 812 respondents, the majority are female (60%), over 35 years old (93 percent), and white (96 percent). The average age of counselors is 46; nine percent is over 55 years of age.

Age	
24-30	1%
31-35	5%
36-45	41%
46-55	43%
56+	9%

Gender	
Female	60%
Male	40%

Race	
White	96%
Asian	1%
Black	1%
Hispanic	.7%
Nat.Amer.	.9%
Other	.5%

TEACHING, COUNSELING EXPERIENCE

Two-thirds of the respondents (66 percent) have six or more years of fulltime teaching experience, and about one-third (34 percent) have 11 or more years of fulltime teaching experience. Nearly half (47 percent) of the respondents have 11 or more years of fulltime counseling experience, while only about one-third (31 percent) have five or fewer years of fulltime counseling experience.

About half of the counselors (48 percent) have been in their current counseling position for five or fewer years, while more than one-fourth (27 percent) have been in their current position for more than ten years. The majority (59 percent) have worked in just one district as a counselor; only 18 percent have worked in three or more districts.

No. of Years of Fulltime Teaching/Counseling

Years	Teaching	Counseling
1-5	34%	31%
6-10	32%	22%
11-15	19%	22%
16-20	9%	15%
21	6%	9%

PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION

Nearly half (43 percent) of the Oregon counselors responding to the survey received their undergraduate degree at a college or university outside Oregon. Slightly more than half (57 percent) completed their teacher preparation in an Oregon college or university.

More than two-thirds of respondents (70 percent) received their counseling certificate in Oregon, and of those 84 percent received their degrees from a public university. Almost all expressed satisfaction with their university preparation to become a counselor (99 percent) and their counselor practicum (97 percent).

Among the respondents, 64 percent hold standard certificates, 16 percent basic certificates, three percent emergency certificates, and 12 percent child development certificates. Only seven percent are certified by the National Board for Certified Counseling but almost half (48 percent) indicate that they want to work on National Board certification.

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EMPLOYMENT STATUS, DISTRICT SIZE, CASELOAD

The majority (82 percent) of the counselors are employed fulltime as a counselor, with 13 percent employed between half or more time but less than fulltime. Only five percent are employed at less than half-time.

Most of the respondents are employed in larger school districts, with 58 percent employed in districts with 3,000 to 60,000 students; only 16 percent are from districts with less than 1,000 students. Most of the respondents (89 percent) come from districts with 25 or fewer fulltime counselors.

The majority of counselors (84 percent) serve only one building, but 16 percent are serving multiple buildings. Of those counselors who report they serve more than one building, 80 counselors indicate they are serving two buildings and 43 indicate they are serving three or more.

In terms of the grades sequences served, 34 percent of the counselors report they are serving grades K-3, 41 percent are serving grades 4-6, 29 percent are serving grades 7-8, and 52 percent are serving grades 9-12. Half (52 percent) of the counselors serve only one of these grade sequences, while 39 percent serve two, four percent serve three, and four percent serve all four grade sequences.

The Oregon Department of Education recently reported statewide average caseloads (pupil/counselor ratios) for 1991-92 as follows: K-12, 584:1; Elementary Schools, 556:1; Middle Schools, 324:1; and High Schools, 283:1. Counselors in this study report caseloads ranging from a low of 1-100 (five percent) to a high of 600 - 1,500 (eight percent).

Caseload

1-100	5%	401-500	12%
101-200	11%	501-600	8%
201-300	26%	600-1500	8%
301-400	30%		

Only 30 percent of the respondents think their current caseloads are satisfactory. Most (85 percent) think that from 50 to 300 students would be the ideal caseload. Most of the counselors (88 percent) indicate they are satisfied with their current counseling position.

RETIREMENT PROJECTIONS

More than one-third (37 percent) of the counselors report that they plan to retire within eight years, and another 45 percent plan to retire by the year 2010. Nearly half of the counselors plan to retire between the ages of 55-58. These statistics indicate there will be a high replacement need for school counselors (263 from these respondents alone) in the next eight years.

Age Planning to Retire

49-54	12%
55-58	46%
59-62	26%
63-76	16%

Year Planning to Retire

	No.	Percent
1990-1993	42	6%
1994-1996	93	13%
1997-2000	128	18%
2001-2005	195	28%
2006-2015	124	18%
2011-2015	80	11%
2016-2066	42	6%

CURRENT ASSIGNMENT, FUTURE ASSIGNMENT, AND NEEDS FOR TRAINING

Counselors were asked to rate 37 responsibilities thought to make up their assignments in three ways; first, by indicating how significant each is within their current assignment; second, how significant each will be within their future assignment if the reforms expected to impact the schools through HB 3565 occur in their district; and third, what training needs they envision in order to provide effective services in each area of responsibility with school reform. Ratings followed a four-point scale explained in the bar graph depictions on the following page.

The six most significant responsibilities of counselor's current assignments (in rank order) were: understanding the influence of home and community on student motivation, identifying at-risk youth, providing referral service to students and parents, counseling students on motivation problems, dealing with the psychological problems of students and families, and counseling on family problems. These same six were among the top six on the "future assignment" list as well, although not in the same rank order.

Counselors see their greatest needs for training in the areas of student motivation problems, providing work-based opportunities and internships, counseling on family problems, applying Oregon school law, and dealing with the psychological problems of student and families.

Counselors were also asked to identify problem areas they may have in upgrading their skills. Most did not cite any major barriers to training although budgeting for counseling materials and travel time to attend workshops are the most frequently identified problems.

Most counselors (80 percent) indicate that teachers will be more involved in providing career advising to students than they currently are with implementation of HB 3565.

Comparative mean ratings of 37 responsibilities of school counselors -- for current assignment, future assignment, and training needs -- are depicted on pages 3-6.

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COMPARING SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRENT ASSIGNMENT TO FUTURE ASSIGNMENT UNDER SCHOOL REFORM AND NEEDS FOR TRAINING

Current Assignment ■

4 = Major part of current assignment
3 = Moderate part of current assignment
2 = Small part of current assignment
1 = Not a part of current assignment

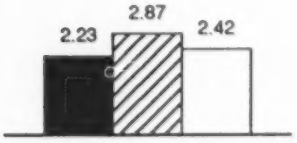
Future Assignment ▨

4 = A major part of future assignment
3 = A moderate part of future assignment
2 = A small part of future assignment
1 = Not a part of future assignment

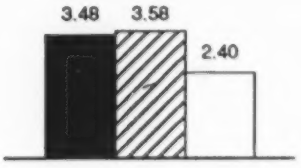
Training Needs □

4 = High need for more training
3 = Moderate need for more training
2 = Some need for more training
1 = No need for more training

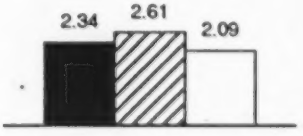
1. Provide career/vocational information to students/families.



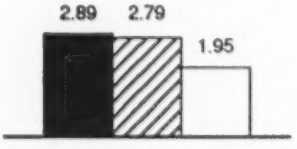
2. Identify at-risk youth.



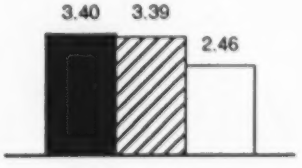
3. Interpret research/measurement data on student achievement on individual basis or school/district basis.



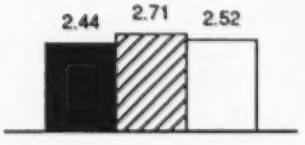
4. Assist teachers and administrators with student discipline problems.



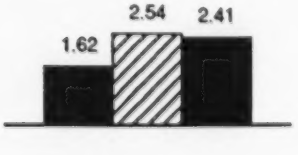
5. Counsel students and their families on psychological, personal, or family issues.



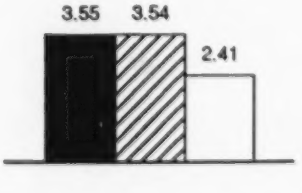
6. Know and apply Oregon School Law when appropriate.



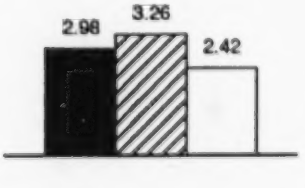
7. Provide consultation to teachers on the integration of career development concepts into all subject areas.



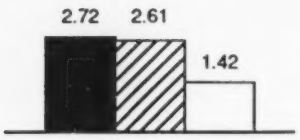
8. Understand the influence of home and community on student behavior and motivation.



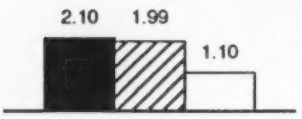
9. Provide consultative services to teachers, including resource identification and group guidance activities.



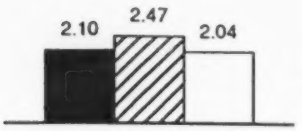
10. Student scheduling.



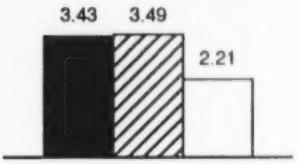
11. Perform staff duties (e.g., lunch room, bus, hall patrol).



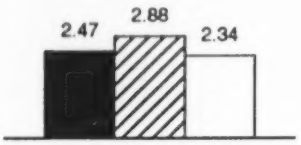
12. Conduct program evaluation.



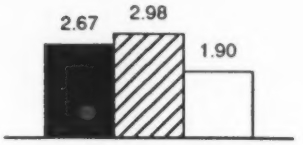
13. Provide referral services for students, parents, and teachers.



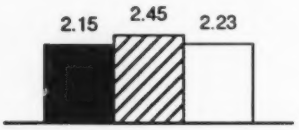
14. Help students and staff to value the contributions of people of differing cultures and backgrounds.



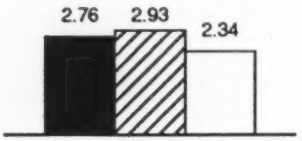
15. Coordinate and articulate between school transition (elementary to middle, etc.).



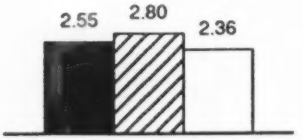
16. Provide guidance/counseling services for students who are physically handicapped.



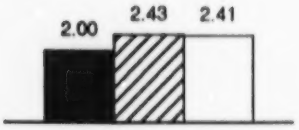
17. Provide guidance/counseling services for students who are educationally handicapped.



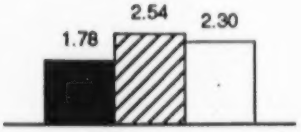
18. Provide guidance/counseling services for students who are educationally gifted.



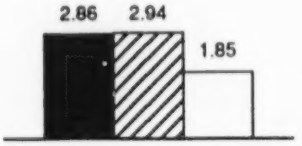
19. Provide guidance/counseling services to students who lack proficiency in English.



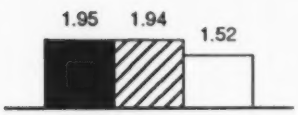
20. Use computers to help students access career information.



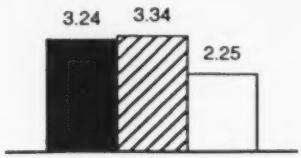
21. Write reports, letters, proposals, and written communications.



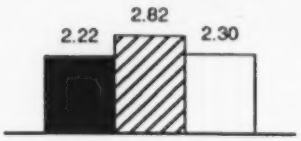
22. Assume administrative responsibility when principal is out of building.



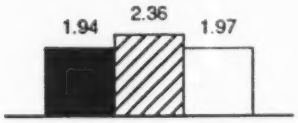
23. Counseling on understanding self-development.



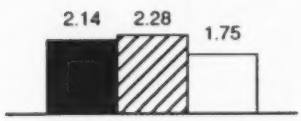
24. Counseling on careers.



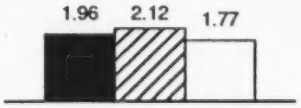
25. Assisting students interested in community college occupational programs, including 2+2 programs.



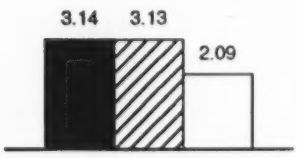
26. Assisting students interested in baccalaureate programs to plan for college/university.



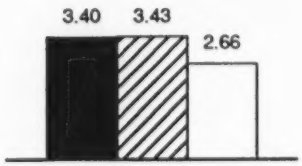
27. Counseling on college financial aid.



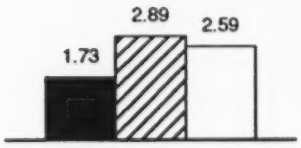
28. Counseling on social interactions (dating, peer pressure).



29. Counseling on student motivation problems.

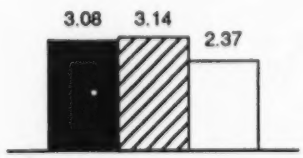


30. Counseling on work-based opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, cooperative work experience).

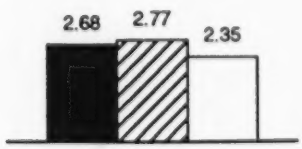


31. Counseling on family problems.

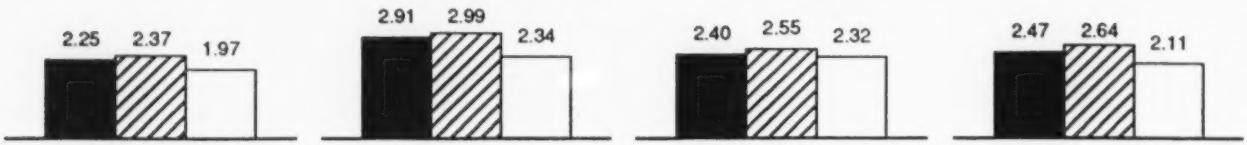
32. Counseling on child abuse.



33. Counseling on suicide.



34. Pregnancy counseling. 35. Substance abuse counseling. 36. Counseling on criminal behavior. 37. Test interpretation.



SOME COUNSELORS COMMENT ON THE IMPACTS OF HB 3565*

On Elementary Schools . . .

"HB 3565 will further support the importance of elementary counselors in all schools. My concern is that elementary counselors remain as a preventative true counseling program and not be forced to cover other areas -- the curriculum, testing, scheduling, etc."

"When I began as a counselor in 1978 the emphasis of my program was prevention: visited each classroom one time per week for 30 minutes of guidance activity, small group counseling regarding friendship/esteem, etc. Crisis and high risk interventions could be counted on one hand for the year. In 1992 the emphasis has changed from prevention to crisis intervention. More children are in need of intensive therapy and I have become the intervener and referral source to outside resources. Small group emphasis has shifted to conflict-anger control. Child abuse reporting for 1991-92 school year is at 17 cases as of Spring 1992. I have had one student attempt suicide on our playground (9 years old). We are a society in crisis."

"Non-graded primary should, if properly designed, reduce stress lessen school-generated self concept problems, and ease student services caseloads. I would hope to have more time for family counseling. Caseloads are too high, contributing to staff, teacher, parent and counselor frustrations and ultimately burnout. I plan to go back to the classroom to lessen my responsibilities and remove myself from unrealistic expectations of building staff."

"I don't believe my school will be affected nearly as much the junior high and high schools nor do I expect my role and responsibilities to be altered to a significant degree. I do believe, however, that there will be an increase in career education at the elementary level and that I may be asked to assist in its implementation."

"Our elementary students are increasingly unprepared -- unable and unwilling to learn the basics. Does anyone see the irony besides me in worrying about the ability to earn a living later in life when our youth are so unable to learn the basics in the schools? So many are not responsible and dependable and do not have adults in their family who model these characteristics. Their attendance in erratic. Their nutrition is poor and so many are depressed -- with good reason."

"As far as I know, HB 3565 does not address home and community needs, stresses and distresses. This is where our students come from, and from my position as child development specialist, I expect to continue addressing student needs that have origins in family and community. I hope implementation of the Act will provide a more developmentally appropriate education at the elementary level."

"I hope counselors begin to be viewed not as a support system but as an integral part of schools just as necessary as math teachers, etc. The problems kids bring to school mostly relate to issues counselors are trained to deal with yet counselors are not increasing in schools despite the increased severity/complexity of the problems. Counselors are also the first to be axed at budget time. Elementary counselors are a must; each school must have someone. We need to put our biggest, best, and most effort at an age when we have a chance to make a better impact."

"Approximately 25 percent of students are seriously lacking in social skills or come from such a disruptive, dysfunctional home life that they simply haven't the skills to function productively in school without special help. Child development specialists are great for educating groups of children in social skills; we desperately need these kind of folks. But they don't have the necessary skills to fix broken lives. So unless you intend to mandate and fund counseling services for all schools, your grandiose plans for educational reform will not appreciably help that 25 percent who aren't equipped to function in any structured setting."

"Hope there will be a greater number of elementary counseling positions, more counselor involvement in classrooms as a "team member, and counseling a specific group for longer periods of time (spanning grade levels). We also need counselor specialization (e.g., at risk, drugs/alcohol, careers, groups, life skills)."

*These comments represent only a fraction of comments; 621 out of 812 respondents, or 76 percent, provided written comments on HB 3565's expected impact on their schools and roles as counselors.

On Middle Schools . . .

"At the middle school level, I think the role of counselor will continue to deal with personal, family, and peer problems that children of this age face. The majority of students are not looking toward careers -- simply survival of the middle years on a daily basis."

"As a middle school counselor, I have great concerns for students with low academic ability as they face the Certificate of Initial Mastery. My concern is what opportunities will there be for those students? I don't feel the State has really looked at the total picture and the ramifications of students' academic abilities."

"The biggest impact in our school will be the need for the counselor to work more with staff and team building. With only one counselor in our building of all junior high this is extremely hard -- to be all things to all people."

"One of our roles at the middle school level will be more involvement with TAG than we presently have. Staff training will be more of a role."

On High Schools . . .

"More testing (performance based) interpretation and more diversity in post high school training/education. More activity involvement in making career choices based upon individual differences. It looks like record keeping will increase, so it's time for all of us in education to utilize as much modern technology as possible. If the program will better meet the needs of students, I'll happily make the adjustments. The role of the counselors needs to be clarified to determine what services counselors should provide. Perhaps classroom teachers can also assume some of the planning responsibilities by going back to advisor/advisee programs."

"I am now working with our senior class. We have put the seniors into two groups. I have the college bound and another counselor helps the students going directly into the workforce and/or community college-technical schools. I do not see that changing. We have two other counselors that work with half the 9-11 graders. Each has a total of about 375 students. I feel their jobs will change more than mine. I'm sure we will all need more training for this program to be successful!"

"Our school has been heavily college oriented but I expect to see more emphasis on career training and preparation. I also envision more technical and vocational support in the district. I think there will be a continued push to deal with the at-risk students."

"More emphasis on career goals and direction in the high school. I feel that there will be more of a direction toward tracking then currently exists. Counselors will be faced with an increasing percentage of high risk students."

"I see the role of the counselor changing in the first two years the student is in high school. I see specialties developing for counseling for the last two years -- academic versus vocational."

"Counselors in high schools are highly skilled individuals who are grossly misused in order to appease administrative persons who historically push what they do not care to do themselves to counselors. Teachers who are in the classroom ought to be counselors' allies. However, they for the most part are not. Our ills they see as trivial. We are few in a school -- it is easy to discriminate against us and to waste our talent. I dearly wish to be a counselor. I wanted to do what I knew kids needed when I was in high school. I have only been somewhat successful. Why? Nonguidance duties that clerical personnel and computers could do. It's time administrators stop the waste! I have a 60 hour Masters in Education and numerous further training. When will I get to use it? Counselors are considered teaching staff and are paid no differently than classroom teachers. We work 4 weeks longer in some districts and many of us have paid and unpaid extra duties -- I'll gladly turn these "perks" over to any classroom teacher who would like them or administrator."

"HB 3565 will free up schools to be more innovative in how they educate children, especially at the high school level. I hope that I will be able to spend more time working with students to overcome personal barriers to becoming educated. Our high school has a career development class and a work experience coordinator. As a high school counselor, I see the personal problems that students have and how they interfere with their school progress. It is clear to me that interventions need to be made prior to school entrance and in elementary school. At high school, counselors need to work with students to overcome their personal problems. My caseload is too large to be effective with students who have more than "moderate" problems. I would like to work more intensively with smaller numbers of students."

"It will make testing, record keeping, choices, placing students in internships much more complicated and time consuming, but it will also open doors to new opportunities, creativity and more original approaches to helping all students, not just the "academic" ones."

"I foresee dramatic impact on counselors to access the "track" students will choose; provide dramatically more career information and give and interpret personality and career interest tests in an integrated systematic fashion; maintain much more data on students and interpret data to students and parents; order and probably be responsible for an updated career information center (which my school of 1,800 does not even have!!) that would include computers and career/college computer software programs, CIS, vertical files, etc. But they will resist it like in the 70's when "career education" was hot and little will actually be done by them! Most districts in the state, including mine, are totally out of compliance with the current state requirements for career education, and the state does not hold them accountable. We "grant" a half credit of career education at the high school level for doing nothing but a one hour career program on CIS. It's a joke! Most of the counselors at my school defer most college counseling questions to me and don't actively seek information on post high school options, even for community/vocational colleges! They are extremely ignorant of careers, career trends, college diversity, options at community colleges, all aspects of financial aid, 2+2 programs, etc. I believe this is typical of counselors in Oregon. There was no career counseling component class required for a counseling certificate -- the optional one I took was useless, except for CIS workshops."

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On Measure 5 Impacts and HB 3565 . . .

"Because of the budget cuts in our district, I am not sure if I will have a job in the next couple of years. It is hard to focus on HB 3565 with our current funding situation."

"I do not believe that HB 3565 will be funded. Until finance for any major change is resolved all else is moot. This act has been a bit like Christmas wishing among children in an impoverished family. Although not a waste of time someone need to get real or get some money for gifts."

"Due to Measure 5, this fine idea will probably die a natural death."

"I believe there will be a need for more counselor time in my junior high. Currently, I am the only person for 415 7-8 graders, many at-risk students. I have no assistant or secretary; our building is very short staffed. Teachers will need to be more involved but I don't know how they will have time, energy or expertise given their ever-growing responsibilities. They (and we) are already being asked to do too much with too little backup. I am concerned about the future of school counseling. There are more and more demands from students and parents for help, but school budget problems are increasing caseloads and reducing positions. I see teachers with little or no counseling training or experience being "placed" in counseling positions as part of their teaching assignments, i.e., teach 4 periods a day, counsel 2 periods. I also see teachers with no counseling training placed in fulltime positions called "student assistants" or "at-risk coordinators" or some such. By staffing this way school districts de-value the profession of counseling and minimize the enormous problems children and families are struggling with. As a result, children are not benefiting from their school experience to the extent we would expect. The unfortunate convergence of Measure 5 (decreased resources) and HB 3565 (increased/changed responsibilities) is increasing the stress on our already shaky systems. These are difficult times for children and families."

"Without financing, state and federal political commitment and community participation it will likely be another bad effort without credibility or lasting impacts."

"I'm having difficulty recognizing how the Oregon Educational Act is going to impact my job when I don't see any viable means of funding it. It seems to me that with Measure Five in place and no obvious solution, the Oregon Educational Act will have to be "Pie in the Sky" for a while."

"The impact will be dramatic! Our role is already changing -- we are doing a great deal of career awareness and looking at community involvement. Our question is -- with all the additional responsibilities, what will be deleted?"

"The philosophy of HB 3565 is sound but implementation including funding is not! I see my responsibilities increasing greatly. I already do the job of three people. I will have to resign and I am an excellent school counselor. Why haven't us "grass roots" eastern Oregon counselors been asked to give input or "sit on" committees before "the fact" of legislation that affects all of Oregon's school employees? Everyone in education in Oregon is concerned and "down" because of Measure 5's effects, particularly next year. Many of my colleagues are planning to leave Oregon. Now we will be faced with HB 3565? What's Oregon school and Government Administration trying to do to its education profession -- push us all to other states? Your professional, caring educators are leaving Oregon for states that protect and reward them."

"With the passage of Measure 5, I am most concerned that our elementary counselors and specialists will be cut. Counseling programs are not mandated by the State Department. This is most distressing as the need is great."

On Career Orientation . . .

"Counselors will do less and less counseling and more career guidance. Services will be provided more in groups, less one to one."

"The role of the counselor will expand to include more career, educational counseling. It will be difficult especially when so much time is taken for personal counseling and administrative duties."

"Counselors here will have to become more aware of the non-college bound student and their needs. New avenues of cooperation for career training will have to be developed between school and industry and the counselor could be the negotiator for those changes. Money will be the major factor in promoting change."

"Certainly students will need much more vocational guidance as 3565 is implemented. We currently do a poor job of these because we have only four counselors for 1,425 students. I'm wondering how we'll be able to do the one-on-one guidance as students work toward the CAM."

"Counselors will have to know more about career paths and be able to help students and their parents choose wisely. Counselors will have to be able to communicate the value of careers not required with four year degrees. HB 3565 has merit. Schools are going to have to quit talking about it and start enacting some reform. Since money is tight and going to get tighter we are going to have to look at ways to reallocate the funds we have. The communities and local business are going to have to stop complaining about the schools' inferior products and start cooperating with schools to provide quality experiences for students. Educators must stop pushing four-year college plans for everyone. We have a big job to do and it is time we got started."

"Career and college preparatory information will shift from grades 11-12 down to grades 8-10. More vocational options need to be developed -- job corps is doing an excellent job with some young people but many more young people need vocational training rather than college prep type courses -- and at an earlier age. I've seen dropouts even in primary school -- those children keep coming some to school but they have no motivation and merely occupy space until they can legally drop out. I would like to see vocational options and different directions based on interests and skills at least as low as junior high and possibly even lower."

"The whole focus, as I understand it, is to prepare students to be workers and to put much more emphasis on a rather narrow definition of career information instead of addressing the real needs of real adolescents in the real world. I hope I'm wrong."

Crisis Intervention vs. Career Counseling . . .

"We are doing mostly intervention/crisis management, rather that prevention. All students should be served but it is impossible given the limited time and large caseload."

"Due to the significant increase in students from dysfunctional homes, we have shifted our emphasis from career/educational counseling to personal/social. THIS IS A MUST!! I'm concerned HB 3565 will put demands on counselors to do it all, not provide the resources/staff to handle the expectations."

"A lower student/counselor ratio is needed. More creativity in finding options, closer monitoring of students' progress, more explanation to parents regarding changes and options."

"The Board needs to address a hierarchy of needs and face the facts that raped, abused, insecure, drug using children need to have help with their issues before growth will occur. HB 3565 will be valuable to college-bound and supported children who have basic needs met. My fear is that children with emotional needs will not be addressed by schools. How very sad. HB 3565 is very exciting to me. This move in a positive direction could blossom for all students with the proper care. Schools are the closest agency to and most trusted by families and children. Our teachers know students best, families best. All kids want to achieve, succeed, please. Many need extra help! Schools see that. Connecting and getting service from CSD, Juvenile, mental health is frustrating. Schools need to be allowed to be a stronger link for services. Give schools resources to help kids and families pull together to achieve what they all want. I hope we do not let HB 3565 weaken our service to needy children."

"HB 3565 comes at a time when the need is much greater for counselors to be involved with issues of abuse, suicide, substance use, family problems, etc., which are heavily impacting school performance and peer relationships = success in school or failure."

"I would like ultimately to see a distinction made between career/guidance counselors and emotional/problem solving counselors. My experience is that most positions are of the first type when what is needed is more of the second!"

"Counseling is becoming increasingly more complex as students are offered more alternatives and as families experience more difficulties. Every year I have less time for students. I am directing more and more programs which also results in less time for students. Although our administration has added a secretary to our department, I am still unable to complete the necessary paperwork after school and on weekends. Paperwork is taking more of my school day. Meetings take up my time after school. I just don't have enough time to complete all my duties."

"I am worried about working more closely with parents. One of our counselors was attacked in her office last week. Home visits are very scary for some of us who work in schools in high crime areas, yet reaching parents who need parenting help is very important."

"Two-thirds of our students are at risk. They will need more individual counseling. Counselors will need to have fewer students in their caseload."

"Our district will expect us to do more with no new definition of service priority to students. Either we will end up all career counselors or counseling will be done by staff in classrooms and we will handle all crisis, personal and family issues. We already teach part days and find ourselves running from office to classrooms several times a day and are still expected to do all secretarial needs, computer needs, crisis counseling and career information, as well as testing."

"I am so swamped I haven't kept up on HB 3565. In addition to counseling, scheduling students, and lunchroom supervision, I coordinate special education testing/services in my building. In the six years I have seen a four fold increase in paper work and significant increases in the numbers of identified students. Regardless of who does the coordinating, help is needed. I would like to see an administrative course taught that would teach the effective use of counselors. Modern school counselors are taught to be mental health professionals and need to be used as such."

Overall Reactions to HB 3565 . . .

"HB 3565 is already impacting my school. We are expected to change for change's sake. No one worries about what our students' needs are. I'm not sure how the mastery level elements will be dealt with. I'm sure the career part of a counselor's job will change. Counselors will surely be expected to do even more jobs in the future. With years of experience, I sometimes question my retiring in two years. I am still young enough to stay on. The conditions I live with daily make me want out of here and the sooner, the better. I have too many students, and trying to meet everyone's needs is impossible. Clerks could do scheduling, but don't. Minimum wage monitors could do hall duty, they don't. More and more jobs are sent my way and nothing is ever taken away. I am head of the guidance department, at no extra pay and attend meeting that are totally worthless. The amount of time I spend on special education students is way too much for how many we have. Now we are expected to be here for evening meetings and Saturdays. No extra pay. If you say no, your attitude is bad and you're not a part of the "team." I am sick of all the politics."

"After years of working toward effective counseling program wherever we do have some time to do growth and development, staff direction/training, we anticipate that HB 3565 will require us to do more paper work (as in the old days of proficiency checks) and guidance type activities -- sad!"

"I do not believe it will work. This is a perfect example of an "innovation" that was passed by the legislature without even a semblance of support from either the public or from the educators who will be required to try to make the "dream" a reality. I hope I am not the first to tell you this. I think it will have little or no effect."

"I hate what site-base management has done in our district: it has put classroom teachers in the position of evaluating and judging specialists; it has pitted specialists against one another in competition for the specialist money/FTE in the building; it has caused counselors to try to package their programs (ride a dog and pony show) to get the best assignments. It has left us feeling unsupported, unheard, and unwilling to continue to play the site-based management game. If the other components of the HB are as well handled I'm not sure I really want to invest in this job 8-4. Do we really need longer school years? Not at this stress level!"

"Currently I feel counselors have been left out of the process. I am witnessing major changes in school reform at both the local and state level, however I do not see a plan which integrates counselors and other student services personnel in the process. This is quite disturbing!"

"Hopefully it will bring us more up to date. We are so far behind in technology, computers and clerical support. We also need more counselors as we have 1 per 400. HB 3565 hopefully will reevaluate and redistribute responsibilities more appropriately."

"HB 3565 is already impacting our district. We are leaping ahead with little clear direction and focus and the district feels as though it is in chaos. There is little positive leadership, no adequate state support and frankly, I think the legislators should spend some time in schools in the classrooms along with our administrators before we plunge headlong into chaos. Until we have some leadership, it is difficult to determine what anyone's role is."

"CIM & CAM tracking sound like a nightmare. Keeping track of credits and transcripts with students scattered from alternative to vocational to community college campuses makes me wish I were closer to retirement! I am well trained in college, financial aid, etc., but need on-going training as things change. This law has the potential to be exciting and beneficial but can be a nightmare if lawmakers do not get out here in the trenches."

"Great ideas, but very little money. I feel sometimes I'm counseling the teachers because of their stressful situations; so I have greater demands of my time."

"I am excited about the emphasis on more career planning and practice on-the-job for many kids who are not, at present, focused or motivated."

"I believe it will have little or no impact on our schools."

"Let's not throw out a perfectly good baby with the bath water. I am not in favor of requiring inexperienced tenth grade youth to make the decisions called for in this Bill. It seems like everyone (including counselors) is asking for "change" (for change sake) but not intending to keep what is tried and proven to be effective. Just to train kids for jobs or to satisfy industry's demands won't do. Let's not loose sight of the students overall needs ... and ... never start a program unless you plan on financing it -- $$$."

"HB 3565 gets Oregon a lot of national press. It looks good on paper but has several fatal flaws. To work correctly, schools must contain up-to-date equipment to train students in career fields. Where do we get the money for that? Community colleges are already over-crowded with students not able to get classes they want. How do they provide more with money dwindling? This design is to keep at-risk kids in school by providing them with a meaningful curriculum. Many at-risk kids are usually out of school before the eleventh grade when they enter the career track. Community opportunities for student training and work experience are for fewer than what will be needed (while students are still in high school). Counselors will be asked to provide more career counseling and be knowledgeable in a variety of programs that will provide career training. This is a great use of counselor time and I look forward to doing it. I just hope we can get the funding to make it work."

"I believe counselors and other specialists will be asked to work longer, perhaps almost year round. I am unwilling to do that and will leave the profession if it happens. I do not have the energy to go to what would be a year-around position."

On Future Training Needs . . .

"Our school district is already developing programs to meet the requirements of HB 3565. Counselors will need more career training."

"I would really like some thorough inservice time on career guidance training in assessment tools for careers -- more than a simple one day event."

"It is critical that counselor training include a strong emphasis on families. Children represent their family system in the schools. In order for counselors to have some impact on those systems (especially dysfunctional families) counselors must be adequately prepared."

"I would foresee our knowledge base needing to be increased on vocational information -- we will be guiding students more towards vocational tracks -- yet continuing to counsel students on personal issues."

"The SDE needs to assume leadership in helping counselors develop knowledge and skills for 21st Century schools. I've seen little come out of SDE in recent years. Certainly there has been almost nothing related to HB 3565. I learn more about this whole business via newspapers than I do directly from the SDE, which seems ironic. My guidance budget next year will be almost non-existent, yet I'm to deal with changes coming from all directions. Who are we kidding?"

"I believe counselors will need to be aware of labor trends, educational resources, limit 1 to 1 counseling, assist students in making career/education decisions earlier. Interface with the community college programs. The role of the school counselor grows more complex -- with heavy demands, pressured responsibilities, and some risk. The future will require specialization skills: family-school problems, personal-social relationships, career and academic prep. The current university training prepares us to counsel from a therapeutic mode...the school districts expect us to schedule, guide academic and prevent "crises" from exploding. It will force me to decide which of the above jobs I want and if a school is the best place to serve."

"The majority of current training focuses on the classroom teacher or the agency counselor. I would like training on the use of small groups at middle schools and the integration of counseling/guidance in the classroom."

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

- A great majority of counselors are satisfied with their current position.
- A majority of counselors are female and predominately over the age of 35 and white. Given the increasing need for schools to employ a diverse staff to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population, further diversity within the counselor pool is strongly indicated.
- There will be a high replacement need for school counselors based on projected retirement plans of counselors over the next ten years. The impacts of Measure 5 and the downsizing many counselors report underway within their districts suggest that some positions may not be replaced. Even if this occurs, however, there will likely be an increasingly strong demand for school counselors over the decade.
- Counselors report spending a major portion of their time in social, emotional, and psychological counseling, and these areas of responsibility have reportedly increased at all levels – elementary, middle and high school – over the past several years. Caseloads are reported to be unsatisfactorily high as well. Given the demands of the counselor's job as reported in this study, it will be very difficult for counselors to respond to the additional demands of HB 3565, particularly related to career advising, without restructuring of counselors' assignments, the addition of more counselors, increasing community agency involvement to provide additional psychological services, and/or a combination of these.
- While counselors do not report major concern over training needs, the highest rated area for training among counselors out of 37 areas comprising their responsibilities in the schools is the area of work-based opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, cooperative work experiences). If counselors are to play a significantly greater role in career advising vis a vis HB 3565, many counselors will need additional training. Many counselors furthermore, report inadequate knowledge of HB 3565 and need to be apprised of the ramifications of the Bill for their school and community.
- Counselors predict that teachers will be more involved in providing career advising to students in the future under HB 3565. Many foresee that counselors will play an important role in helping to train teachers and providing assistance to them as these roles increase.

Next Steps

Numerous important implications for the future of school counseling in Oregon's schools are indicated from these data. The next steps are to review the findings of the study with key groups such as the Oregon Department of Education, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, Oregon colleges and universities -- particularly those that prepare teachers, counselors, and administrators, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon Counseling Association, the Interim Committee on Education of the Legislature, and interested others. A series of meetings throughout Fall 1992 are planned for this purpose, and to develop recommendations from these groups to bring to the Joint Boards of Education during Winter 1993.

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For further information about the 1992 Oregon School Counselor Study:

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